

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 0449

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN, IT
SUBJECT: HIGH LEVELS SHIFTS IN PRESS WORLD

REF A) FLORENCE 0100 B) FLORENCE 0112 C) FLORENCE 0113

1. AS NOTED IN REFTELS, TWO TOP JOURANLISTS OF MILAN-BASED CORRIERE DELLA SERA, ITALY'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS AND WIDELY-READ NEWSPAPER, ARE MOVING TO TAKE OVER TWO OF COUNTRY'S BEST-KNOWN SMALLER PAPERS. SHIFT RAISES QUESTIONS AS TO WHY EDITORS THEY ARE REPLACING ARE BEING REMOVED; WHETHER TWO PROVINCIAL PAPERS ARE IN FOR CHANGE IN LINE; WHETHER PRESS MAGNATE AND CORRIERE OWNER ANGELO RIZZOLI MAY BE PUTTING MONEY INTO TWO PAPERS, OWNED BY ATTILIO MONTI AND BOTH IN RED; AND, MOST IMPORTANT, WHETHER SHIFT IMPLIES CHANGES IN EDITORIAL POLICY AT INFLUENTIAL CORRIERE.

2. JOURANLISTS IN QUESTION ARE CORRIERE VICE DIRECTOR FRANCO DI BELLA AND CORRIERE'S ROME BUREAU CHIEF ALBERTO SENSINI, WHO WILL BECOME EDITORS-IN-CHIEF OF IL RESTO DEL CARLINO (BOLOGNA) AND LA NAZIONE (FLORENCE), RESPECTIVELY. ALTHOUGH BOTH POLITICAL CONSERVATIVES - SENSINI,) FOR EXAMPLE, IS REPUTEDLY IDENTIFIED WITH PRI - THERE IS DISAGREEMENT IN MILAN ABOUT EFFECT THEY WILL HAVE ON EDITORIAL POLICIES OF PAPERS TO WHICH THEY ARE GOING. WORKING LEVEL NEWSPAPER MEN SEEM TO THINK LITTLE
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WIL CHANGE. MONTANELLI, HEAD OF GIORNALE AND ARCH-ENEMY OF RIZZOLI AND OTTONE, IS CONVINCED OF CONTRARY. HE TOLD US HE FEARS MONTI IS MAKING HIS PEACE WITH COMMUNISTS AND CONCLUDES THAT ITALY WILL BE LEFT WITH ONLY GIORNALE TO OPPOSE THEM.

3. WHY DI BELLA AND SENSINI MIGHT WANT NEW JOBS APPEARS

FAIRLY CLEAR. OUR JOURNALISTIC SOURCES IN MILAN TELL US DI BELLA IS FED UP OVER WAY RIZZOLI AND EDITOR PIERO OTTONE RUNNING CORRIERE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO WEAKNESS IN DECIDING AND CARRYING OUT EDITORIAL POLICY. WITH 23 YEARS OF SERVICE AT CORRIERE, DI BELLA WAS REGARDED AS POINT OF STABILITY BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS THERE, WHO LAMENT HIS DEPARTURE. HE WAS ALSO ESPECIALLY INFLUENTIAL, SINCE HIS WAS RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPOSE HEADLINES AND GENERALLY PUT PAPER TOGETHER. NO ONE HAS BEEN DESIGNATED TO REPLACE HIM. MONTANELLI CONSIDERS DI BELLA AN OUTSTANDING TECHNICIAN BUT A POOR WRITER. AS FOR HIS POLITICS, MONTANELLI DESCRIBES HIM AS AUTHORITARIAN BY NATURE BUT QUITE PREPARED TO DO WHATEVER HE IS PAID FOR.

4. AS FOR SENSINI, FLORENCE JOB IS PROMOTION. AS CORRIERE'S ROME BUREAU CHIEF WITH PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR COVERING INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION SENSINI HABITUALLY HAD HIS SAGE POLITICAL SKETCHES PRINTED IN PAPER'S PRESTIGIOUS FRONT PAGE LEFT HAND COLUMN EDITORIAL SPACE. LIKE DI BELLA, HE IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN FRUSTRATED. MONTANELLI DESCRIBES HIM AS DECENT BUT GUTLESS.

5. RUMORS OF OTHER CHANGES CHEZ RIZZOLI HAVE BEEN IN MILL FOR SOME TIME. LATE LAST YEAR CORRIERE DEPUTY DIRECTOR MICHELE TITO WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HEADED FOR EDITORSHIP OF NAPLES' IL MATTINO THAT RIZZOLI HAS ACQUIRED. GASPARE BARBIELLINI AMADEI, ANOTHER DEPUTY DIRECTOR, WAS SAID TO BE ON WAY OUT. AND PIERO OTTONE WAS ALLEGEDLY TO LEAVE HIS CONFIDENTIAL

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POST TO BECOME KIND OF ROVING AMBASSADOR FOR RIZZOLI. NONE OF THIS HAPPENED, AND WHILE TALK CONCERNING OTTONE STILL CIRCULATING, FORMER AMBASSADOR FEDERICO SENSI SAID TO HAVE GOTTEN ASSIGNMENT AS RIZZOLI ROVER.

6. MOST FASCINATING QUESTION IS WHAT CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED MEAN FOR CORRIERE. LAMENTABLY, WE DO NOT HAVE A CLUE TO THIS ALTHOUGH THE BURDEN OF LOCAL SPECULATION IS THAT THE CORRIERE IS NOT LIKELY TO BECOME MORE ANTI-COMMUNIST NOR MORE PRO-AMERICAN HOWEVER ELSE IT MAY BE AFFECTED. WAYMAN

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